

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Over 1400 URLs spreading Anti-India content banned during Op Sindoor: Vaishnav

NEW DELHI, JUL 30: The government blocked more than 1400 URLs on digital media, primarily of social media accounts from Pakistan, during Operation Sindoor as they carried misleading and anti-India content, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav told Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

He said it was observed that certain social media handles, many operating from outside India, were actively propagating false and potentially harmful information during Operation Sindoor.

"The ministry also issued directions for blocking of over 1,400 URLs on digital media during Operation Sindoor. The content of these URLs included false, misleading, anti-India news content, communally sensitive content primarily from Pakistan-based social media accounts and inciteful content against Indian Armed Forces," Vaishnav said in a



written reply.

"Under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act 2000, government issued necessary orders to block websites, social media handles and posts in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state, and public order," he said responding to a question from BJP member Tejasvi Surya.

Vaishnav said the government had also issued an advisory to the media asking all media channels to refrain from showing live coverage

of defence operations and movement of security forces in the interest of national security.

He said during Operation Sindoor, a centralized control room was established for interdisciplinary and inter-departmental coordination.

"This Control Room functioned 24x7 and facilitated real-time information dissemination to all media stakeholders," Vaishnav said.

He said this control room comprised nodal representatives from the Indian Army,

Navy, and Air Force, along with officers from various government media units, and officials from the Press Information Bureau (PIB).

Social media handles and posts spreading fake news and misinformation were actively identified.

Vaishnav said a fact check unit under the PIB actively monitored social media platforms and online news sources in real time to detect fake images, edited videos, misleading narratives, and any manipulated content targeting the operation's objectives, government agencies, or security forces.

The unit debunked Pakistani propaganda against India and Indian Armed Forces and fact-checked many posts countering such content.

Additionally, the links related to disinformation or false news concerning Operation Sindoor, fact-checked by the fact check unit, were promptly shared, Vaishnav said. (Agencies)

US President Trump announces 25 pc tariff plus penalty on India from Aug 1

WASHINGTON, JUL 30: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced the imposition of a 25 per cent tariff on all goods coming from India starting August 1, plus an unspecified penalty for buying military equipment and crude oil from Russia.

The surprise announcement came a day after Indian officials said that a US trade team would visit from August 25 to negotiate a trade deal.

The announcement is being seen as a pressure tactic to get New Delhi to agree to demands made by the US, which has in recent days got favourable trade deals with major partners like Japan, the UK and the European Union.

In a post on social media handle, Trump termed India's trade policies as "most strenuous and obnoxious".

"All things not good! India will therefore be paying a tariff of 25 per cent, plus a penalty for the above, starting on August first," Trump said.

The penalty because India has made large purchases of oil and military equipment from Russia.

India's import of crude oil from Russia has risen from 0.2 per cent of total purchases before the Russia-Ukraine war to 35-40 per cent. New Delhi is the largest buyer of Russian oil after China.

Trump said though India is America's friend, "we have, over the years, done relatively little business with them because their (India) tariffs are far too high,



among the highest in the world, and they have the most strenuous and obnoxious non-monetary trade barriers of any country".

He said India have always purchased significant amount of military equipment and energy products from Russia at a time when everyone wants Russia to stop the "killing" in Ukraine.

New Delhi did not immediately react to the tariff announcement but sources indicated officials were in a huddle to work out the implications.

It was, however, not clear if the 25 per cent duty will be imposed in addition to the existing 10 per cent baseline tariff. The 10 per cent tariff, which currently applies to most Indian goods barring a few, was announced by Trump on all countries on April 2. Also, the exact quantum of the penalty is unclear.

Among India's major trade competitors, the US has imposed lower tariffs on Vietnam (20 per cent) and Malaysia (25 per cent), but higher on Bangladesh (35 per cent) and Thailand (36 per cent).

On April 2 this year,

Trump announced high reciprocal tariffs on number of countries including India (26 per cent). The implementation of high tariffs was immediately suspended for 90 days till July 9 and later until August 1, as America is negotiating trade deals with various countries. However, the baseline tariff of 10 per cent remains.

In addition to this, the US has imposed 50 per cent duty on steel and aluminium and the 25 per cent on auto sector.

Meanwhile, negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement are on as a team from the US is visiting New Delhi on August 25 for the sixth round of talks.

The top officials of the countries concluded the fifth round recently in Washington.

India's chief negotiator and special secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal and Assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch held the deliberations.

During 2021-25, the US was India's largest trading partner. The US accounts for

about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade.

With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of USD 35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24. It was USD 41 billion in 2024-25 and USD 27.7 billion in 2022-23.

In 2024-25, bilateral trade between India and the US reached USD 186 billion. India exported USD 86.5 billion in goods while importing USD 45.3 billion.

In services, India exported an estimated USD 28.7 billion and imported USD 25.5 billion, adding a USD 3.2 billion surplus. Altogether, India ran a total trade surplus of about USD 44.4 billion with the US.

In 2024, India's main exports to the US included drug formulations and biologicals (USD 8.1 billion), telecom instruments (USD 6.5 billion), precious and semi-precious stones (USD 5.3 billion), petroleum products (USD 4.1 billion), vehicle and auto components (USD 2.8 billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (USD 3.2 billion), ready-made garments of cotton, including accessories (USD 2.8 billion), and products of iron and steel (USD 2.7 billion).

Imports included crude oil (USD 4.5 billion), petroleum products (USD 3.6 billion), coal, coke (USD 3.4 billion), cut and polished diamonds (USD 2.6 billion), electric machinery (USD 1.4 billion), aircraft, spacecraft and parts (USD 1.3 billion), and gold (USD 1.3 billion). (Agencies)

At Least 46 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire, Gaza Hospitals say, as War drags on

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), JULY 30: Israeli strikes and gunfire in the Gaza Strip killed at least 46 Palestinians overnight into Wednesday morning, most of them among crowds seeking food, local hospitals said.

The dead include more than 30 people who were killed while seeking humanitarian aid, according to that treated dozens of wounded people.

The Israeli military didn't immediately comment on any of the strikes, but says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, because the group's militants operate in densely populated areas.

The deaths came as the United Kingdom announced that it would recognize a Palestinian state in September, unless Israel agrees to a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, following a similar declaration by France's president. Israel's foreign ministry said that it rejected the British statement.

The Shifa hospital in Gaza



City said that it received 12 people who were killed Tuesday night when Israeli forces opened fire towards crowds awaiting aid trucks coming from the Zikim crossing in northwestern Gaza.

Thirteen others were killed in strikes in the Jabaliya refugee camp, and the northern towns of Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, the hospital said.

In the southern city of Khan Younis, the Nasser hospital said it received the bodies of 16 people who it says were killed Tuesday evening while waiting for aid trucks close to the newly-built Morag corridor, which separates Khan Younis from

the southernmost city of Rafah.

The hospital received another body for a man killed in a strike on a tent in Khan Younis, it said.

The Awda hospital in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp said that it received the bodies of four Palestinians who it says were killed Wednesday by Israeli fire close to an aid distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, or GHF, in the Netzarim corridor area, south of the Wadi Gaza.

In addition, seven Palestinians, including a child, have died of malnutrition-related causes in the Gaza Strip in the past 24 hours, the terri-

tor's health ministry said on Wednesday. A total of 89 children have died of malnutrition since the war began in Gaza. The ministry said that 65 Palestinian adults have also died of malnutrition-related causes across Gaza since late June, when it started counting deaths among adults.

Hamas started the war with a militant-led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, in which around 1,200 people and abducted 251 others. They still hold 50 hostages, though Israel believes that more than half the remaining hostages are dead. Most of the rest were released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 60,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its count doesn't distinguish between militants and civilians. The ministry operates under the Hamas government. The UN and other international organisations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

bit after a near 19-minute journey, and at an altitude of 745 km. NISAR has been developed for microwave imaging purpose globally and it carries L-Band radar provided by NASA and S-band designed by ISRO with a capability to acquire fully polarimetric and interferometric data. The mission objective is to study land and ice deformation, land ecosystems and oceanic regions in the areas of common interest to the scientific communities of the United States of America and India.

GSLV-F16 Rocket Carrying NISAR Satellite Lifts Off

SRIHARIKOTA (ANDHRA PRADESH), JUL 30: Marking ISRO's maiden collaboration with NASA, a GSLV rocket on Wednesday blasted off from this spaceport to place the NISAR earth observation satellite, jointly developed by the two space agencies, in an intended orbit.

The 51.7 metre tall three stage GSLV F-16 rocket soared into the skies at the end of a 27.30 hour countdown, carrying the 2,393 kg satellite. The launch vehicle majestically lifted-off from



the second launch pad at this spaceport, situated about 135 km east of Chennai.

The GSLV rocket is slated to place the satellite in the Sun Synchronous Polar Or-

Space-Based Inputs Supporting Govt's Flagship Initiatives: Minister Tells LS

NEW DELHI, Jul 30: Space-based inputs are being used to support the government's several flagship initiatives, including Digital India, Smart Cities Mission and forecasting agricultural output, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said in the Lok Sabha today.

Singh said the Bhuvan Geoport and database of Aadhaar enrolment centres, use of space technology for a geocoded postal address system, and rooftop photo voltaic (PV) potential assessment for 60 solar cities and smart cities have been done to support the Digital India and Smart Cities Mission.

"Space-based inputs are being used in support of several flagship initiatives of the government, including Digital India, Smart Cities Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Forecasting Agricultural Output using Space, Agrometeorology and Land-based Observation (FASAL) (crop acreage assessment and production forecast)," he said during the Question Hour.

CHAMAN (Coordinated Horticulture Assessment and Management using Geo-



informatics) for horticulture management, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), PMKSY-WDC (Prime Minister Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (Watershed Development Component), PMGSY, PMFBY, PMAY-HFA, and PM GatiShakti are another area where space-based inputs are being used, he added.

Singh, the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, highlighted that high-resolution satellite data is used for generating an urban geospatial database of AMRUT Cities. He said that under the FASAL programme, remote sensing data is used for generating crop acreage and forecasting crop production estimations for 11 crops.

Under the CHAMAN programme, horticulture

acreage and production estimation are done for seven horticulture crops, in addition to management plans for area expansion and post-harvest infrastructure.

Singh said that the MGNREGA programme, geospatial technology is enabled for monitoring the creation of assets and activities, as well as for planning new assets and activities.

Under the PMKSY-WDC programme, geospatial technology is developed for monitoring the implementation of watershed development interventions and monitoring the impact of the interventions, he said.

"Geoport and very high-resolution satellite data are utilised for monitoring the development of rural roads under the PMGSY programme. Satellite data is be-

ing utilised for optimising the crop cutting experiments, monitoring crop damage, as well as for developing crop yield proxies to facilitate faster claim settlement for farmers, under the PMFBY programme," he said.

The minister said the Department of Space (DoS) has proposed to establish a 'Global Space Institute' (GSPI) to impart holistic, comprehensive, and multi-disciplinary education in several aspects of space technologies, policies, and space exploration.

The GSPI, a dedicated global institute, would help to promote the space economy by guiding the incubation of start-ups, space entrepreneurship, space commercialisation and also on possible avenues for private investment into the space sector.

The institute is expected to actively partner with leading academic institutions, industries, and government agencies, both nationally and internationally, facilitating the advancement of space technology education and creating a network of shared knowledge and resources, he said.

8.8-magnitude earthquake causes tsunami in Russia, Japan, sets off warnings for Alaska, Hawaii

TOKYO, JUL 30: One of the world's strongest earthquakes struck Russia's Far East today, an 8.8-magnitude temblor that caused a tsunami in the northern Pacific region and prompted warnings for Alaska, Hawaii and other coasts south toward New Zealand.

Several locations advised evacuations, but no major injuries have been reported.

Cars jammed streets and highways in Honolulu as the tsunami alerts coincided with the Tuesday afternoon rush-hour. Warning sirens blared as people moved to higher ground. Hawaii schools cancelled after-school and evening activities.

A tsunami of 50 centimeters (1.6 feet) was detected at the Ishinomaki port in

northern Japan, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. That was the highest measurement so far among several locations around northern Japan.

The Russian areas nearest the quake's epicentre on the Kamchatka Peninsula reported damage and evacuations, but no serious injuries.

Hawaii and Oregon warn residents of potential damage

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said a tsunami had been generated by the quake that could cause damage along the coastlines of all the Hawaiian islands.

"Urgent action should be taken to protect lives and property," the warning stated. The first waves were expected around 7 p.m. Tuesday local time.

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management said on Facebook that small tsunami waves were expected along the coast starting around 11:40 p.m. local time, with wave heights between 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 centimeters). It urged people to stay away from beaches, harbors and marinas and to remain in a safe location away from the coast until the advisory is lifted.

"This is not a major tsunami, but dangerous currents and strong waves may pose a risk to those near the water," the department said.

Much of the West Coast spanning Canada's British Columbia province, Washington state and California were also under a tsunami advisory.

Russian regions report quake damage

The quake at 8:25 a.m. Japan time had a preliminary magnitude of 8.0, Japan and US seismologists said. The US Geological Survey later updated its measurement to 8.8 magnitude and the USGS said the quake occurred at a depth of 20.7 kilometers.

The quake was centered about 119 kilometers east-southeast from the Russian city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, which has a population of 180,000, on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Multiple aftershocks as strong as 6.9 magnitude were recorded.

The first tsunami wave hit the coastal area of Severo-Kurilsk, the main settlement on Russia's Kuril Islands in the Pacific, according to the local governor Valery Limarenko. He said residents were safe and staying on high ground

until the threat of a repeat wave was gone.

The quake caused damage to buildings and cars swayed in the streets in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, which also had power outages and mobile phone service failures. Russian news agencies quoting the regional Health Ministry saying several people sought medical help in Kamchatka after the earthquake, but no serious injuries were reported.

Among the world's strongest recorded quakes

The earthquake appeared to be the strongest anywhere in the world since the March 2011 earthquake off northeast Japan that was 9.0 magnitude and caused a massive tsunami that set off meltdowns at a nuclear power plant. Only a few stronger earthquakes have

ever been measured around the world.

The tsunami alert disrupted transportation in Japan. Ferries connecting Hokkaido and Aomori on the northern tip of Japan's Honshu island were suspended, as well as those connecting Tokyo and nearby islands, and some local train operations were suspended or delayed, according to operators. Sendai airport temporarily closed its runway.

Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said so far no injuries or damages have been reported. The agency, in response to the tsunami alert, issued an evacuation advisory to more than 900,000 residents in 133 municipalities along Japan's Pacific coast, from Hokkaido to Okinawa. The number of people who actually took shelter was not available.